

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8911

UNCLAS HELSINKI 1570

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP, PINR, FI (AALTO, ALEC)

SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC DATA ALEC AALTO

REF: CANNEY/HOUSTON TELECON JULY 23

1. ALEC AALTO HAS SERVED AS INFORMATION CHIEF FOR THE FINNISH COUNCIL OF STATE SINCE FEBRUARY 1973. AALTO WAS BORN SEPTEMBER 24, 1942, IN HELSINKI AND RECEIVED THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF LAW IN 1967. HE THEN CONTINUED HIS STUDIES FOR THREE YEARS AT OXFORD WHILE ALSO WORKING AS A CORRESPONDENT FOR FINNISH TV AND A FREE-LANCE JOURNALIST. IN 1971 HE BECAME ACTING CHIEF EDITOR OF SWEDISH-LANGUAGE TV NEWS AND LATER MOVED TO RADIO NEWS. IN OCTOBER 1972 AALTO WAS APPOINTED PRESS CHIEF FOR THE CSCE CONSULTATIONS AT DIPOLI.

2. WHEN THE CURRENT CARETAKER GOVERNMENT WAS APPOINTED JUNE 13, 1975, AALTO WAS NAMED SECRETARY TO PRIME MINISTER KEIJO LIINAMAA IN ADDITION TO HIS INFORMATION RESPONSIBILITIES. SIMULTANEOUSLY IT WAS REVEALED THAT AALTO IS DUE TO BECOME DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS OF NESTE, THE STATE OIL MONOPOLY. HE WILL NOT ASSUME THIS POST UNTIL THE LIINAMAA GOVERNMENT IS REPLACED, HOWEVER. AALTO IS A SOCIAL DEMOCRAT BUT HAS MANAGED TO AVOID BEING EMBROILED IN PARTISAN DEBATE.

3. AALTO HAS BLACK HAIR, IS OF MEDIUM HEIGHT, SLIM, NEAT, WITH A PRECISE DELIBERATE MANNER. HE SPEAKS
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EXCELLENT OXFORD-ACCENTED ENGLISH AS WELL AS FRENCH,

GERMAN, SWEDISH, FINNISH, AND SOME RUSSIAN. HE IS UNFAILINGLY PLEASANT AND AT THE SAME TIME APPROPRIATELY CAUTIOUS WHEN DISCUSSING OFFICIAL MATTERS. IN ADDITION TO BEING SOMETHING OF A CSCE EXPERT, AALTO IS THE AUTHOR OF A PAMPHLET ON FINLAND'S EEC NEGOTIATIONS, COMMISSIONED BY THE FINNISH FOREIGN MINISTRY WHILE RATIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENT WAS BEING DEBATED IN 1972.

4. AALTO IS IN EFFECT THE PRESS SPOKESMAN FOR THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT, SINCE THE COUNCIL OF STATE IS ROUGHLY SYNONYMOUS WITH THE CABINET. PRESIDENT KEKKONEN DOES NOT HAVE A PRESS SPECIALIST IN HIS OFFICE. AALTO DOES NOT EXPECT TO BE PARTICULARLY ACTIVE DURING CSCE, HOWEVER, SINCE CSCE PRESS RELATIONS UNDER DIRECTION OF JAAKKO BERGQVIST, FINNISH PRESS ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON, BROUGHT BACK TO HELSINKI ESPECIALLY FOR CSCE. AUSTAD

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